

Between subordinate and insubordinate

Paths towards complementizer-initial main clauses

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Abstract: Insubordinate constructions have been argued to derive from regular subordinated clauses through ellipsis of the matrix clause (Evans 2007). However, ellipsis in actual discourse has not yet been systematically studied with respect to its potential as a source of functionally specialized insubordinate constructions. This paper aims to fill this gap, by examining complementizer-initial dyadically dependent clauses (i) in a corpus of online question-answer interactions in Spanish, French, German and English and (ii) in natural conversation in Spanish and English. Dyadically dependent clauses have a complementizer in sentence-initial position. They lack an explicit matrix, but can be construed as dependent on a matrix from the previous turn. According to Evans' hypothesis, they should be a potential source for true complementizer-initial insubordinate constructions. Our

analysis shows that dyadically dependent clauses develop specialized discourse functions, involving the organization of textual and interpersonal relations. If such functions are conventionalized, this would result in true insubordinate constructions. Next, we look for actual functional overlap between the dyadically dependent clauses in our data and attested insubordinate constructions in the four languages studied. Functional similarities between dyadically dependent clauses and insubordinate constructions are found for optative insubordinate constructions in Spanish, French and German, for discourse-connective insubordinate constructions in Spanish, English and German, and for copying insubordinate constructions in Spanish and English.

Keywords: subordination, dyadic dependence, insubordination, online interactions, conversational corpora, European languages.

1. Introduction

In recent years, considerable attention has been paid to sentences that exhibit certain properties of subordinate clauses – such as the presence of an initial complementizer – but are used independently, and resist, in one way or another, syntactic tests for subordination. Those constructions are instances of the phenomenon known as *insubordination* or “the conventionalized main clause use of what, on prima facie grounds, appear to be formally subordinate clauses” (Evans 2007: 367). For example, the Spanish complementizer *que* can introduce independent clauses, as in (1).

(1) A: *he engordado es que yo me siento más gorda es que es verdad*

B: *que yo no te veo más gorda yo te veo perfecta*

A: I've put on weight it's like I feel fatter it's true

B: [que] you don't look fatter to me you look perfect to me

(COLA)

A broad variety of insubordinate constructions has been identified cross-linguistically (Evans 2007, 2009; Evans & Watanabe forthcoming; Gras 2011, 2013; Mithun 2008; Schwenter 1996, 1999; Verstraete, D’Hertefelt & Van linden 2012, among others), but it is as yet not entirely clear how insubordinate constructions arise historically.

Evans (2007, 2009) has argued that insubordination arises through the reanalysis of erstwhile subordinate clauses into main clauses following ellipsis of the original main clause. Specifically, in a first stage, a matrix clause that is recoverable from the context is omitted. In a following stage, the felicitous restoration of syntactic elements becomes restricted or excluded by convention. This paves the way to the final stage, in which the ellipsed material may not be recoverable at all. Evans’ pathway is summarized in Figure 1.

Subordination	Ellipsis	Conventionalisation of ellipsis	Reanalysis as main clause structure
A Subordinate construction	B Ellipsis of main clause	C Restriction of interpretation of ellipsed material	D Conventionalised main clause use of formally subordinate clause (Constructionalization)

Figure 1. Historical trajectory of insubordinated clauses (Evans 2007: 370)

However, the ellipsis-based pathway is controversial. Mithun (2008) argues that Evans' analysis is a viable hypothesis about the origin of only some of the constructions he discusses. Specifically, it might explain constructions originated as complements, but not the ones that originated as adverbial (adjunct) constructions.

On a different line, Van linden & Van de Velde (2014) give a diachronic explanation for autonomous and semi-autonomous subordination patterns in Dutch in terms of hypoanalysis (Croft 2000). Their main criticism on Evans' proposal is that it does not clearly account for the reasons why speakers decide to drop the main clause. They argue that the emergence of insubordinate constructions does not need to be in elliptical contexts. Instead, even straightforward subordinate constructions may functionally specialize. As a next step, the specialized functions are reinterpreted as being expressed by the marker of subordination, which in turn justifies omission of the matrix clause. In other words, hypoanalysis offers the alternative that helps understand "the semantic and pragmatic motivations for the language user to do away with the main clause" (Van linden & Van de Velde 2014: 241).

In the face of the alternative accounts by Mithun (2008) and Van linden & Van de Velde (2014), it is fair to call into question the explanatory scope of Evans' pathway. At the same time, to our knowledge, no systematic study exists that looks for possible links between patterns of ellipsis and patterns of insubordination. Evans' pathway would gain in credibility, if it could be shown that ellipsed constructions do in fact associate with specific discourse functions that in turn serve as a basis for conventionalization, in the spirit of Traugott & König (1991). In brief, Evans' hypothesis would be corroborated if we can find a credible link between the pragmatics of ellipsis and the semantics of insubordination.

Against this background, this paper turns to what we will call dyadically dependent clauses, i.e. clauses occurring in spontaneous discourse that are construed as being 'projected' (Halliday 1985: 227) by a complement-taking predicate in an earlier turn. For example, in question-answer contexts, the answer can be construed as depending on a matrix verb in the question. This is what happens in (2), where the answer *que distingues...* ('that you distinguish...') is introduced as a dependent on the matrix verb *significa* ('it means') in the previous turn.

(2) A: *¿Qué significa ser racional?*

‘What does it mean to be rational?’

B: *Que distingues entre el bien y el mal creados por un precepto social.*

‘That you distinguish among good and evil created by a social precept.’

(YCCQA)¹

The same pattern is found in various European languages. It is illustrated in (3)-(5) for French, German and English, respectively.

(3) A: *Que pensez-vous d'une femme qui reprend son travail 5 jours après la naissance de sa fille?*

‘What do you think of a woman who returns to work five days after the birth of her daughter?’

¹ *Yahoo!*-based Contrastive Corpus of Questions and Answers (YCCQA).

B: *Que ce n'est pas raisonnable.*

'That it is not reasonable.'

(YCCQA)

(4) A: *Was bedeutet älter zu werden für euch?*

'What does it mean to get older for you?'

B: *Dass ich meine Entscheidungen bald endlich alleine treffen darf!*

'That I may finally make my own decisions soon!'

(YCCQA)

(5) A: What does it mean if you're getting white hair before 20?

B: That you are the next messiah.

(YCCQA)

In the above examples, dyadic dependence arguably represents a form of ellipsis. The answer in (5) may be taken to depend on an elided matrix clause *<it means>*, recoverable from the preceding question. The same can be said of the examples in (2)-(4). However, the label 'ellipsis' comes with the questionable

presupposition that some linguistic element has actually been removed, whereas 'dyadic dependence' merely assumes that speakers can build syntactic structures on material available in previous discourse. We use it here as a more neutral term to substitute for Evans' ellipsis.

At the same time, dyadic dependence covers a gradient of syntactic relations between straightforward subordination and clear-cut insubordination, including cases as the one in (6), where *that it's safe* may simply be taken to complete A's previous turn, supplying the complement to *know* that was still unexpressed. Yet, there are also cases as in (7), where the *that*-clause is construed as a dependent on *know*, which already had an argument (what we do) in A's previous turn.

(6) A: How do you know?

B: What?

A: That it's safe (BNC)

(7) A: Face to face that's the difference. Er face to face sales erm you know from John's conversation with you what we do.

B: Mm.

A: That we close everything on the on the phone. (BNC)

In the extreme case, it is uncertain whether a clause is dyadically dependent at all.

Consider the sequence of *que*-clauses in (8). The first *que*-clause is simply subordinate, as part of an *es que* ('it's that...') construction; the second one depends on *he dicho* ('I've said'). Subsequent *que*-clauses can be interpreted as dyadically dependent on the preceding complement-taking predicates, but those dyadic dependency relations become less obvious the further the discourse moves on from the initial complement-taking predicates.

- (8) [Friends talking about their lunch. They are discussing the size of a chicken breast]

A:1[*es que yo no he dicho que sean así. cacho de basta que eres una basta*]²

² In the COLA corpus, brackets ([]) are used to indicate overlapping speech and the slash and backslash are used to indicate rising (/) and falling (\) intonation, respectively.

B: 1[*me has dicho así*]

B: *son así tío Luis son así*

A: *pero que no son tan pitufas*

B: 2[*que sí son pitufas*]

A: 2[*a ver*]

A: *que no son como la Pitu a ver*

B: *bueno me he comido una de esas luego he salido*

A: 1[I haven't said that they are like this, piece of brute, that you're a brute/]

B: 1[you've told me like this]

B: they're like this pal Luis they're like this

A: but [que] they are not so tiny

B: 2[[que] they are tiny indeed]

A: 2[let's see]

A: [que] they're not like Pitu come on

B: well I've eaten one of those then I've gone out (COLA)

From a theoretical perspective, the analytical uncertainty caused by examples such as (8) is encouraging, in that, if anything, the existence of a syntactic gradient from dependence over dyadic dependence to insubordination supports Evans' hypothesis. In practice, however, some workable restriction is needed to distinguish the phenomena. In this paper, we restrict dyadic dependence to cases that meet two conditions. First, they consist of a complementizer-initial clause that has no preceding matrix clause within the same turn. Second, the complementizer-initial clause is preceded by a complement-taking predicate of which it can be construed as a projection in a previous turn no further up in the discourse than the previous turn by the same speaker.

In what follows, we take dyadically dependent clauses as a proxy to Evans' ellipsis contexts and as a potential starting point for his proposed pathway towards insubordination. In that light, we address two questions. First, do dyadically dependent clauses have specialized discourse functions? Second, if so, to what extent do the discourse functions of dyadically dependent clauses relate to the functions of insubordination?

To answer these questions, we focus specifically on dyadically dependent clauses with the default complementizer for finite complement clauses. We base our analysis on two data sets. One comprises the four languages illustrated in (2)-(5) above, that is Spanish, French, German and English, with examples drawn from online question-answer interactions in the *Yahoo!-based Contrastive Corpus of Questions and Answers* (YCCQA). The other data set contains more natural conversational data from the *Corpus Oral del Lenguaje Adolescente* (COLA), the spoken section from Spain of the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA) and the spoken component of the *British National Corpus* (BNC), which present recorded interactions in Spanish and English, respectively.

As we will show, the answer to our first research question is a clear ‘yes’. Dyadically dependent clauses have a range of specialized discourse functions, which recur in all four languages studied. This supports Evans’ pathway to the extent that dyadically dependent clauses offer a potential basis for the conventionalization of associated discourse functions, leading to the emergence of insubordinate constructions proper. However, the answer to our second research question is less straightforward. Based on the literature on complementizer-initial

in subordinate clauses in the four languages, we do find functional overlap between complementizer-initial subordinate clauses and the dyadically dependent clauses examined here. Some functions of subordinate clauses can be traced back to the functions associated with dyadic dependence. But subordinate clauses also display functions which our current data set does not allow us to trace back to dyadically dependent clauses. On this point, then, the evidence for Evans' pathway is more tentative.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly discusses the corpus data and methodology used. Section 3 presents a general description of complementizer-initial dyadically dependent clauses, with a focus on the functions these clauses pick up in discourse. Section 4 discusses the phenomenon of subordination in the four languages under examination and looks for relations between the functions of subordinate clauses and those of dyadically dependent clauses. Section 5 summarizes our findings and presents some final conclusions.

2. Data and methodology

The data analysis for this paper proceeded in two rounds. In the first round, we based our functional analysis of dyadic dependence exclusively on question-answer interactions drawn from the *Yahoo!-based Contrastive Corpus of Questions and Answers* (YCCQA) (De Smet 2009). YCCQA has been compiled from question-answer interactions on the online *Yahoo! Answers* forum, where internet users can ask and respond to questions. The forum has sub-sites for various national languages, which have been sampled for question-answer interactions in English (UK & Ireland), German, French (France) and Spanish (Spain). The corpus has a number of important advantages with respect to the goals of the present study. First, YCCQA offers parallel data for the languages represented. The data have been produced by speakers of the different languages under nearly identical circumstances, which makes the data highly comparable. Second, YCCQA allows easy identification of question-answer interactions, and as such offers quick and abundant access to just one conversational context that invites the use of dyadically dependent clauses. This keeps interactional parameters constant and greatly facilitates interpretation. Third, given that the data consist entirely of neatly regulated two-turn interactions, dyadic dependence is easy to identify. The data

does not confront us with the syntactic messiness typical of spoken interaction.

That said, note that the kind of usage represented in YCCQA, while essentially written, is not highly monitored and tends to be very informal, still approximating in some respects informal spoken interaction. This also means that spelling is highly inconsistent. Examples quoted from the corpus below preserve the original spelling, which often deviates from standardized spelling.

Instances of dyadically dependent clauses have been collected by querying the corpus for answers beginning with a complementizer, that is *que* (Spanish), *que* or *qu'* (French), *dass* (German) or *that* (English). The results of the search were then analyzed manually, first filtering out noise (e.g. pronominal *that* in English or wh-pronoun *qu'* in French) and then analyzing the discourse function of the dyadically dependent clause in relation to the preceding question and to the answer turn as a whole. We strove to obtain a roughly equal number of instances of dyadically dependent clauses for the four languages. For German, the original search produced only 93 hits – accordingly, all were analyzed. For French and Spanish, a 100-hit sample sufficed to obtain a comparable number of dyadically dependent clauses. For English, noise was extensive (largely due to homonymy

between complementizer *that* and pronominal and demonstrative *that*), so we had to analyze 800 hits. Table 1 gives an overview of the data analyzed, showing the number of hits for the original query, the size of our sample, and the eventual number of actual dyadically dependent clauses withheld for analysis. Based on these figures, and knowing the total number of answers in the corpus, we could further calculate a normalized rate of occurrence of dyadically dependent clauses in the corpus (per 1000 answers), for each of the four languages. It is worth noting that dyadically dependent clauses appear to be most common in Spanish and least common in English and German – indeed, dyadically dependent clauses are estimated to be nine to ten times more frequent in Spanish than in German or English.

Language	Answers	Hits	Sample Size	Dyadically dependent clauses	Rate of occurrence
English	194412	1633	800	47	0.49
French	138874	469	100	51	1.72
German	117780	93	93	47	0.39
Spanish	125187	1158	100	46	4.25

Table 1. Data from YCCQA

Two methodological side-notes are in order at this point. First, questions on the *Yahoo! Answers* forum can receive multiple answers. In some cases, this offers us an opportunity to contrast the effect of different structural choices in answering the same question. Second, the question turns have a specific structure in the corpus, which is imposed by the architecture of the online form for submitting questions. In one input field a short question is formulated, which can then be elaborated in a second field. Potential answerers only see the elaboration when clicking the short question on the site. Although answering a question requires clicking it, we cannot know whether answerers actually read the elaboration. We have assumed that answerers have read the short question. An example of a question-answer interaction from the corpus is given in (9), showing the typical sequence of a short question followed by an elaboration, as well as the appearance of multiple answers from different users. Where examples are quoted from the corpus, question and answer tags from the corpus have been omitted and simply replaced by A and B respectively.

(9) A: What's the weather like in London during New Year's? I have a friend who's thinking of going there over the holidays.

B1: [...]anything from -3 to 8 degrees centigrade. can have both clear blue skies and heavy rain, its pretty unpredictable

B2: [...]Cold and rainy! Or clear and sunny! Or snowy and dark. Britain's weather is not predictable. (YCCQA)

The findings from the YCCQA data served as input to a second round of analysis, in which we turned to natural conversational data. Where the YCCQA data were to offer a very controlled setting in which to explore the functions of dyadic dependence, natural conversation was to reveal the phenomenon in its full complexity and under arguably normal circumstances. Our purpose was to check whether the findings from YCCQA would be confirmed and to see if they could be further refined. To this end, we collected additional examples for two of the four

languages examined, namely Spanish and English. The Spanish data were drawn from the 500,000-word Madrid section of the *Corpus Oral del Lenguaje Adolescente* (COLA) and from the spoken Peninsular Spanish section of the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA), querying both corpora for any turns initiated by *que*. The English data were drawn from the 10-million-word spoken component of the *British National Corpus* (BNC), which was similarly queried for any turns initiated by *that*. With Spanish, we chose a language in which complementizer-initial in subordinate clauses are highly common (Gras, forthcoming), and where (judging by the YCCQA data) dyadic dependence likewise appears a frequent phenomenon. With English, we included a language where complementizer-initial in subordinate clauses are uncommon and dyadic dependence seems to be less commonly resorted to.

3. Properties and functions of dyadically dependent clauses

In what follows we offer a brief general description of the dyadically dependent clauses in the YCCQA data set and subsequently present a qualitative analysis,

focusing on the specific functions dyadically dependent clauses fulfill in their discourse context (Section 3.1). Next we check our analysis against examples taken from natural conversation, to corroborate and refine our findings (Section 3.2).

3.1. Dyadically dependent clauses in YCCQA

The dyadically dependent clauses in the YCCQA data set occur invariably in answers to open questions, as in (2) through (5) above. Their ellipsed matrix clause, as recoverable from the preceding question, typically contains a verb of identification (i.e. verbs meaning ‘be’, ‘mean’, etc.), a verb of mental projection (i.e. ‘think’, ‘believe’, etc.), a verb of communication (i.e. ‘say’, ‘tell’, etc.), or a verb of volition (i.e. ‘wish’, ‘want’, etc.). The four types of matrix are illustrated in (10) through (13).

(10) *¿Qué significa el término intrínseco?*

‘What does the term *intrinsic* mean?’

(YCCQA)

(11) What do you think about the US election results? (YCCQA)

(12) *Que dit le prophète Muhammad à propos des pleurs?*

What does the prophet Muhammad say about crying? (YCCQA)

(13) *Was wünscht Ihr Euch? wenn Ihr einen Wunsch frei hättet?*

‘What do you wish for yourselves? when you had a wish to make?’

(YCCQA)

Following Stenström’s (1984) classification of responses, the answers containing dyadically dependent clauses in our data set fall into three types. The majority are ‘identifying’ answers, in which a respondent simply provides the requested information and does so explicitly. Some are ‘implying’ answers, by which the respondent does not provide a value for a missing variable explicitly, but answers in such a way that one can be inferred. Finally, some are ‘supplying’ answers, by

which the respondent provides inadequate information (information that was not required). Examples (14) to (16) illustrate these types of answer.

Type I: Identify

(14) A: *Was muss ich bei der Planung eines Frühstücksbüffet beachten?*

‘What should I consider when planning a breakfast buffet?’

B: *Dass der Kaffee immer schön warm bleibt!*

‘That the coffee is always nice and warm!’ (YCCQA)

Type II: Imply

(15) A: *Que pensez vous de Ségolène Royal qui dit "Obama c'est inspiré de moi pour son élection"?*

‘What do you think of Ségolène Royal, who said “Obama got inspired by me for his election campaign”?’

B: *Que les français ne l'ont pas écoutée et ils ont bien fait.*

‘That the French did not listen to her and they did well.’ (YCCQA)

Type III: Supply

(16) A: What does it mean if you’re getting white hair before 20?

B: That you are the next messiah. (YCCQA)

Turning to their function in discourse, dyadically dependent clauses are found to fulfill a number of different functions. In part, writers’ choice to syntactically attach their answer to a complement-taking predicate in the previous turn is no doubt motivated simply by economy. Often dyadic dependence avoids repetition of considerable discourse chunks. For example, the answer in (17) avoids repetition of the recoverable matrix *der bisher größte Zufall in meinem Leben war*.

(17) A: *Was war für euch der bisher größte Zufall in eurem Leben?*

‘What was for you the biggest coincidence in your life?’

B: *Dass ich überhaupt lebe!*

‘That I live at all!’

(YCCQA)

It is likely that the more cumbersome matrix clauses are, the more they are prone to repetition avoidance. As a result, some questions appear to more readily invite dyadically dependent answers than others. For example, the question in (18) (with a highly complex matrix) elicited various answers, all of which consist either of dyadically dependent finite clauses, infinitives, or simple noun phrases.

(18) A: *Qu'est-ce qui vous énerve le plus dans votre vie actuelle?*

‘What irritates you most in your current life?’

B1: *Que ceux qui ont le pouvoir et la connaissance, ne fassent pas en sorte que l'humanité vive mieux...*

‘That those who have the power and knowledge, do not act accordingly so that humanity might live better’

B2: *d'avoir pris 4 kg...*

'having gained 4 kilograms...'

B3: *la routine*

'Routine'

(YCCQA)

To the extent that dyadic dependence is motivated only by economy, it is unlikely to be the source of insubordinate constructions with specialized functions. That said, the data show that economy is not the only effect of dyadic dependence. Various other functions can be identified in specific discourse contexts. Because these functions recur in the four languages studied, we will suggest here that they follow naturally from the formal properties of dyadically dependent clauses, which are essentially identical across the four languages.

First, when initiating a long answer, dyadically dependent clauses usually function to summarize the complete answer. A typical example is given in (19), where the dyadically dependent clause provides the gist of the answer, and the rest of the paragraph simply elaborates.

(19) A: *¿Qué opinan del iPhone?*

'What do you think about the iPhone?'

B: *Que es la mayor estafa en la historia de los celulares!!! el iPhone es una total aberración en lo que ha celulares se refieren, tiene millones de fallas y funciones que debería tener y no las tiene, solo aquí te muestro 40 [URL omitted] [...]*

'That it is the biggest scam in the history of cell phones! The iPhone is a complete aberration as regards cell phones, it has millions of flaws and features that it should have and it does not, here I show you only 40 [URL omitted] [...]' (YCCQA)

Another example is given in (20), although here the answerer eventually strays from the topic summary in the dyadically dependent clause. The breakdown in

coherence this causes testifies to the summarizing function of dyadically dependent clauses in long answers.³

(20) A: What are your thoughts on global warming?

B: That it happens all through time, and that there is very little we can do about it. I was just reading this very interesting piece about how sailors, some famous like James Cook, Admiral Lord Nelson who logged weather charts, and this item goes back some 400 years and from those records they have found that there has been a huge variance in weather patterns, and that this is likely to continue. There are things we can do though to aid us all, stop the deforestation and coal burning, that is causing pollution throughout the world, I only have to look at what London was like not so long ago when most people had coal fires and the pollution was horrendous. They used to call the fogs pea soupers because you couldn't see through them. Now that

³ Indeed, in this case coherence would be improved by substituting the dyadically dependent clause by an independent clause (*it happens all through time, and there is very little we can do about it*), since this would not necessarily construe its contents as a summary of the following answer.

most coal fires at least in London are no longer in use, that has cleared the air considerably. Cars can be made cleaner and that I think benefits the air quality so we can do things to help ourselves. (YCCQA)

Notice that answers that do *not* begin with a dyadically dependent clause support a much greater variety of internal structures. In (21), for example, the answerer first evades the question, providing an answer only in the conclusion of her turn.

(21) A: What is your concept of happiness?

B: That moment prior to sleep is for me a good gauge of how happy I am. If I slip into sleep easily without any internal doubts or chatter then that is how I gauge my happiness. Basically it's down to how comfortable I am with myself. (YCCQA)

Second, where the dyadically dependent clause constitutes the complete answer turn, it is often in contexts where the answerer expresses strong opinions, as illustrated in (22) and (23).

(22) A: *¿Qué piensan de Hugo Chávez Frías, presidente de Venezuela?*

‘What do you think of Hugo Chávez Frías, president of Venezuela?’

B: *Que es un verdadero payaso.*

‘That he is a real clown.’ (YCCQA)

(23) A: *De quoi êtes-vous absolument sur et certain?*

‘What are you absolutely certain of?’

B: *que la race humaine est tout à fait inutile et meme nuisible sur Terre!*

‘That the human race is completely useless and even harmful on earth!’

(YCCQA)

Contrast, in this respect, the answers to the same question in (24). Both a strongly opinionated and a more neutral answer are possible, but the latter is not constructed with a dyadically dependent clause.

(24) A: *Que pensez vous de Ségolène Royal qui dit "Obama c'est inspiré de moi pour son élection"?*

'What do you think of Ségolène Royal, who said "Obama got inspired by me for his election campaign"?'

B1: *Que les français ne l'ont pas écoutée et ils ont bien fait.*

'That the French did not listen to her and they did well.'

B2: *Leur deux campagnes se sont centres sur le fait de faire partie d'une "minorité" mal représentée au gouvernement, peut-être qu'elle parlait de ça?*

'Both their campaigns were centered on the fact of being part of a 'minority' poorly represented in government, maybe that is what she meant?'

(YCCQA)

Third, dyadically dependent clauses are used in answers that are socially disruptive. Verbal aggression is common in the YCCQA data, presumably because writers are essentially anonymous. Moreover, contrary to face-to-face conversation, withholding an answer on an anonymous online forum has no conversational impact, since it will be unnoticed. As a consequence, our corpus data show many instances in which linguistic resources are used to signal that a question is not worth answering. In (25), the patronizing use of *chérie* ('darling') to address the questioner and the unhelpful reliance on implicature in the answer are both used to this effect. As (25) also illustrates, dyadically dependent clauses are common in this setting, being used to imply that the answer to the question is self-evident or that the question itself is irrelevant. Similar examples are given in (26)-(28).

(25) A: *Lorsqu'une femme on dit qu'elle est chaude ça veut dire quoi exactement?*

'When a woman is said to be hot what does that mean exactly?'

B: *Qu'elle est prête, chérie.*

‘That she’s ready, darling.’

(YCCQA)

(26) A: *Tengo 21.000 euros para gastar este verano, ¿qué me proponéis?*

‘I’ve got 21.000 euros to spend this summer, what do you suggest me [to do]?’

B: *Que dejes de soñar y levántate de la cama ya.*

‘That you stop dreaming and get out of your bed now.’

(YCCQA)

(27) A: *Was bedeutet die knallrote nase meines katers? habe einen kleinen kater, der ganz weiß ist mit einigen schwarzen “kuhflecken” das gesicht ist ganz weiß. mir ist ausgefallen, dass seine nase manchmal ganz blass ist und manchmal richtig rosa bis rot. was mag mir mein kater damit sagen?*

‘What does the red nose of my tomcat mean? (I) have a small tomcat, who is all white with a couple of black spots, its face is all white. It struck me that sometimes its nose is all pale and sometimes it is right pink or red. What does my tomcat mean to tell me by that?’

B: *Dass er kein Kater ist, sondern Rudolf heißt und ein Rentier ist!*

‘That he is not a tomcat, but is called Rudolf and is a reindeer!’

(YCCQA)

(28) A: What are you thinking right now?

B: That I should answer this question.

(YCCQA)

In sum, the dyadically dependent clauses in our data come with three readily identifiable discourse functions, being used (i) as summarizing statements initiating long answers, (ii) to express strong opinions, and (iii) to respond disruptively to questions perceived as irrelevant. Needless to say, these functions may combine in a single utterance. For example, the dyadically dependent clause in (29) functions as topic statement to the rest of the answer, but at the same time helps the answerer to convey her opinion with extra strength.

(29) A: What would you think here? if the fella you were with 6 yrs suddenly breaks off with you and is gone every second saturday night were you can't reach him till midday next day??

B: That he probably found someone else. Whether is another girl, or some guy. He found someone else that is giving him something he felt was missing from the 6 year relationship. (YCCQA)

As these functions recur across the four languages examined, it is plausible that they are related to other recurrent properties of dyadically dependent clauses.

Two such properties can explain the effects observed. On the one hand, dyadically dependent clauses contrast with clauses repeating the matrix clause of the preceding question. Where the matrix clause in question involves a verb of mental projection, it often corresponds to a marker of epistemic modality. Its omission, therefore, can be seen as a signal that the answerer does not wish to epistemically qualify her answer. For example, repetition of a matrix clause

containing *je pense...* ('I think...') in (30) would weaken the modal force of the opinion expressed.

(30) A: *Que pensez-vous des députés qui font seulement acte de présence à l'assemblée ou ne viennent pas?*

'What do you think of representatives who only put in an appearance at the assembly or do not show up at all?'

B: *que y aurait LA une superbe réforme à faire [...]*

'That on that point there is a great reform to be made.' (YCCQA)

On the other hand, the presence of the complementizer in dyadically dependent clauses signals that the clause corresponds syntactically to the missing value focused on by the wh-word in the preceding question. This syntactic correspondence entails that the dyadically dependent clause contains an adequate and complete answer to the preceding question. In addition, a dyadically dependent clause is explicit in signaling its relation to the preceding question – in contrast to an

alternative formulation with an independent clause without complementizer. This explains why dyadically dependent clauses in answers are used to come straight to the point, correlating with strong opinions and answers perceived as self-evident. And it explains why dyadically dependent clauses are seen to convey a complete answer to the preceding question, correlating with the summarizing function of dyadically dependent clauses in long answers.

3.2 Dyadically dependent clauses in spoken language data

Examples drawn from spoken corpora by and large confirm the functions of dyadically dependent clauses established in the YCCQA data. In question-answer pairs, the presence of the complementizer in the dyadically dependent clause signals that the missing value focused on in the question is supplied directly. Consequently, in the spoken material too we find dyadically dependent clauses used to give succinct answers, and to explicitly mark a clause as a full and adequate answer to the preceding question. This is illustrated in (31).

(31) A: ¿*Qué opinas tú de los niños?*

'What do you think of children?'

B: *Que son unos cielos. Para poco rato, vamos.*

'That they are darlings. For a short while, of course.' (CREA)

Exploitation of *that* to rhetorical effect is particularly clear in (32). Speaker B wants to avoid explaining what was Mrs. Thatcher's part of a deal between her and himself. In an attempt to pre-empt further questions about the deal, he uses the complementizer *that* to construe his answer as complete.

(32) A: So what about Mrs Thatcher's memoirs? The timing.

B: Well I glanced Yeah, yeah. You know, look, I did a deal with Mrs Thatcher in nineteen eighty six, that I wouldn't open up many of these issues, and if she sticks to the deal, I'll stick to the deal.

A: But she hasn't.

B: As far as I'm concerned, personally, so far, she has.

A: What was the deal then?

B: That I wouldn't pursue the issues of nineteen eighty six. And I I haven't I

(unclear) with the No it's very simple, I left it to the select committees of the

House of Commons.

(BNC)

Where the dyadically dependent clause appears at the beginning of a longer turn it contains the concise answer to the preceding question. The remainder of the turn elaborates. In (33) speaker B responds to A's question first with a general opinion, expressed in the dyadically dependent clause, and then explains his position in the remainder of the turn. Example (34) shows an alternative strategy, where B's use of repeated *que*-clauses reflects the availability of multiple answers all deemed equally adequate.

(33) A: And how does that go down?

B: Yes fine, because they can raise any issues.

A: On a regular basis. What do the rest of you think about that?

C: That perhaps it's easier to do in a smaller department, I mean I've got checkouts, and the majority of my staff are part-time, and I've only got three full-timers, so it's quite often the case that at nine thirty, one thirty, five thirty, eight thirty, it's a case of coming in and then relieving somebody else straight away, you don't necessarily have the time to spend with them.

(BNC)

(34) A: *Bueno a ver, ¿qué pensáis del sexo en la sociedad?*

'Well let's see, what do you think of sex in society?'

B: *Que está muy bien. Que es un una forma, se podría decir, de evadirse del estrés. Que es necesario. Es necesario, pero con cuidadín. Con cuidadín. Con cuidadín.*

'That it's fine. That it's one way, you could say, to escape stress. That it's necessary. It is necessary, but being careful. Being careful. Being careful.'

(CREA)

As in the YCCQA data, the succinctness of dyadically dependent clauses is found to correlate with strong opinions. In (35) speaker B expresses a very negative opinion about Bolivian Spanish. The conciseness of B's answer reflects the certainty of a previously formed, immediately available judgment.

(35) A: *¿Qué opina usted del español en Bolivia?*

'What do you think of Bolivian Spanish?'

B: *Que es pésimo.*

'That it's terrible.'

(CREA)

Finally, dyadically dependent clauses are also used in spoken data in socially disruptive answers. In (36) the dyadically dependent clause is used to put an end to the conversation by interrupting the normal development of the interaction.

(36) A: *coge la otra ésta es mi silla*

[...]

B: *que sí que vale ya me he cogido la silla qué quieres/ qué más quieres/*

A: *que te calles*

A: take the other one this is my chair

[...]

B: [que] yes [que] ok I've taken the chair what do you want/ what else do you
want/

A: that you shut up

(COLA)

Of course, the examples from the spoken material are not restricted to question-answer pairs. Outside question-answer pairs, we find dyadically dependent clauses taking up additional functions. The following examples merit special attention, because they clearly reflect some of the functions also found in true insubordinates (see section 4 below). In (37) *That* explicitly marks B's utterance as reported speech.

(37) A: Mm, well look, what I'm going to say to you know is, time marches on,
that, do you agree that we go ahead with what Lillian's suggesting?

B: That we try out a petition throughout all the centre's in the town.

A: Yeah. (BNC)

In other cases, dyadically dependent clauses complete another speaker's turn and collaboratively move the discourse forward. In (38) and (39) *that* helps signal the speaker's intention to complete the previous speaker's turn.

(38) A: Yeah but (pause) it's what she's perceiving really isn't it?

B: Yeah.

A: What she's deluding herself to think

C: Didn't he help with that illusion?

A: Not really.

B: I don't think he really tries to hide the fact that he's like

C: that he steals her money.

A: Yeah

C: to go down to the pub

A: Yeah he doesn't really try to impress her he makes things worse I think

C: OK so she's a doting mother, is that right? (BNC)

(39) A: *Las plantas éstas me gustan mucho. En cestos. Pues a lo mejor esto, fíjate. Ya verás...*

B: *¿Que viene alguna suelta?*

A: *Mira, no hija, rota. No viene, no. Se nos habrá roto por el camino.*

A: I like these plants very much. In baskets. Well maybe this, check. You'll see...

B: That any [plant] comes loose?

A: Look, no dear, broken. It doesn't come [loose], no. It might have broken on the way. (CREA)

In sum, the spoken corpora provide additional evidence of the discourse functions identified for dyadically dependent clauses in YCCQA. Most importantly, in both

interactional settings dyadically dependent clauses are exploited to signal that the answer to a preceding question is complete and adequate. As such, dyadically dependent clauses mark discourse continuity. Outside question-answer interactions, the spoken data reveal further motivations for the use of dyadically dependent clauses. These include (again) maintaining discourse continuity, but also flagging that older discourse content is being repeated and signalling the intention to complete another speaker's turn.

4. Complement insubordination

Where the previous section has shown that dyadically dependent clauses are used with specialized text structuring and intersubjective discourse functions, the present section addresses the possible relation between dyadically dependent clauses and the specific insubordinate constructions attested in the languages examined, with a focus on complement insubordination. The goal is to detect possible links between the two construction types, in the form of functional overlap. To the extent that such

overlap is found, a case can be made that insubordinate constructions developed from dyadically dependent clauses.

Complement insubordination is a phenomenon that has been attested in most European languages. There is a general tendency in Romance languages, with the so-called polyvalent *que/che*⁴ (Koch & Oesterreicher 1990), and it is also present in Germanic languages (Lindström & Londen 2008 for Swedish; Verstraete, D'Hertefelt & Van linden 2012 for Dutch and a comparative Germanic analysis), with various degrees of frequency and functional diversification. These constructions are very frequent in contemporary Spanish and German, less common in other European languages such as French, and almost non-existent in English. Reference grammars are not a reliable source for information on these constructions because insubordination often stays below the radar of description, and the frequency of some insubordinate types varies across varieties of the same language.

⁴ This conjunction *que/che* does not make explicit any determined logical-semantic relation. Its value is determined by the context (Koch & Oesterreicher 1990: 145-146).

At the outset, then, it is important to stress that our survey is necessarily non-exhaustive. Our picture of existing insubordinate constructions is largely based on the available literature and may contain gaps. That said, any possible link detected between dyadically dependent clauses and insubordinate constructions would give support to Evans' (2007) ellipsis-based pathway. In what follows, we start with a brief overview of insubordinate constructions in each of the four languages (Sections 4.1 to 4.4), before passing on to evaluating the possibility of links to dyadically dependent clauses (Section 4.5).

4.1 Complement insubordination in Spanish

In contemporary Spanish, complement insubordinate constructions with initial unstressed *que* are very frequent and have been classified in two main subtypes: modal uses, e.g. (40), which take the verb in the subjunctive mood, and discourse connective uses, e.g. (41), which usually take the verb in the indicative mood (Gras 2011, 2013).

(40) *¡Que sean felices!*

‘May you be happy.’

(CREA)

(41) *Ana, que va a llover. Mira el mal día que hace.*

‘Ana, [que] it’s going to rain. Look what an awful day it is.’ (COLA)

Among the modal uses, we find optatives and directives (repeated 2nd person orders and 3rd person orders). Among the discourse connective uses, there is agreement on the fact that the essential value is that of establishing a connection to previous discourse or, occasionally, to the situational context (Garrido 1998; Rodríguez Ramalle 2008; Gras 2013 and Gras and Sansiñena resubmitted). This basic value may, in specific contexts, receive overtones of insistence, or can involve the representation of indirect speech (Garrido 1998; Pons 2003; Etxepare 2008; Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2009; Gras 2011, 2013; among others).

4.2. Complement insubordination in French

In French complement insubordination with initial *que* is only available for the expression of wishes (42) and directives addressed to a 3rd person (43), with verbs in the subjunctive mood (see Le Goffic 1993; Deulofeu 1999):

(42) *Que Dieu nous aide!*

‘May God help us!’

(Google example)

(43) *Qu’il parte!*

‘[Tell] him to leave!’

(Le Goffic 1993: 543)

Other marginal uses have been attested when complementizer *que* comes after quantifiers or interjections (Debaisieux & Deulofeu 2004), apparently associated with surprise or negative evaluation, as in (44) and (45):

(44) *Oh! Que je vous avais pas vu!*

‘Oh! I hadn’t seen you.’

(Debaisieux & Deulofeu 2004: 10)

(45) *Assez! Que ça commence à m'énerver!*

'Enough! It starts to annoy me.' (Debaisieux & Deulofeu 2004: 10)

4.3. Complement insubordination in German

Complement insubordination with initial *dass* is available for the expression of directives (order/prohibition) (46), desideratives (47), evaluation (48), elaboration (49) (Verstraete, D'Hertefelt & Van linden 2010; Verstraete & D'Hertefelt 2012), and assumption of hearer perspective (50) (Schlobinsky, n.d.):

(46) *Dass du mir ja nicht zu dünn angezogen aus dem Hause gehst.*

'Don't you leave the house too thinly dressed!'

(Verstraete, D'Hertefelt & Van linden 2010)

(47) *Dass er bloss keinen Unfall hat!*

'[Let's hope] he doesn't have an accident'

(Verstraete, D'Hertefelt & Van linden 2010)

(48) *Dass alle immer meinen müssen sie sind schwanger...*

'That everyone must always think they are pregnant...[is ridiculous/annoying]'

(YCCQA)

(49) *Und können Sie nun die alten Tischler, die gewandert haben, von denen, die nun überhaupt nicht gewandert haben, auseinanderkennen? Dass man nun sagen würden die haben mehr Erfahrung?*

'And can you distinguish the old carpenters, those who travelled for training, from those who did not do this? In other words, would you say they have more experience?

(Verstraete & D'Hertefelt 2012)

(50) Client: *Ich glaub, also, ich geb erstmal klein bei [...] wenn ich jetzt nochmal was dagegen sage [...] dann wird er wieder laut. Also muß ich schon mal klein begeben.*

‘I think I pull in my horns at first [...] if I say something against that again, [...]

then he’ll start yelling. That’s why I have to pull in my horns a bit.’

Therapist: *Daß Sie doch jetzt das Gefühl haben, sich ducken zu müssen.*

‘That you already have the feeling now you have to knuckle under.’

(Schlobinsky, n.d.)

Verstraete, D’Hertefelt & Van linden (2010) have identified different subtypes for some of the insubordinate complement constructions, e.g. evaluatives can be expected or unexpected; deontics can be controlled or uncontrolled. German thus appears to have a wide variety of meanings available for insubordinate constructions, as is the case in Spanish.

4.4. Complement insubordination in English

The range of possible insubordinate constructions in contemporary English seems to be quite restricted. According to previous studies, complement insubordination

with initial *that* is only available to express unexpected evaluation in formulaic utterances expressing surprise (51) (Verstraete & D'Hertefelt 2012). A corpus example is given in (52), showing the speakers' negative evaluation on the occurrence of an SoA. The presence of *should* is a typical feature of this evaluative type of insubordinate constructions in English.

(51) That it should have come to this! (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 944)

(52) 'I want to go on the stage,' she had said, six long months ago now. 'I want --'

But she had said it without much hope. People like Dad didn't struggle to make money and to live in a smart district of Leeds, in order to have a daughter living a dangerous, flashy, immoral life. For that was how he saw it:

'Never. Never, Lily. That I should ever see the day...'

(BNC fiction section)

However, our own analysis of spoken data produced a handful of insubordinate *that*-clauses fulfilling other discourse functions. In (53) *that* explicitly marks topic

continuation and is used by the speaker to clarify previous discourse while at the same time marking discourse continuity, despite a distracting remark.

(53) A: The governor's thing is coming about quite useful tonight because we've been talking about the law as regards governors and parents' rights and what you're supposed to ask parents

B: Parents' what? (pause)

A: Parents' rights, yeah.

B: Not such a thing as parents' rights is there?

A: That the parents are allowed to, to actually opt their children out of certain things. But they can only do that if they're actually away that they, they are aw-- (pause) that they can actually do it. (BNC)

In (54) speaker B uses a copying insubordinate, repeating his/her own previous turn. *That* signals repetition of previously introduced content.

(54) A: he owes me anyway.

A-B-C: (laugh)

A: That he's owed me for (pause) a year! Just about. (BNC)

Finally, in (55) speaker A utters an insubordinate *that*-clause to complete B's turn and help move the discourse forward.

(55) A: You know they're just changing don't you.

B: Well isn't that book

A: That this book tells you what the new ones are. Yeah. (BNC)

4.5. Overlap between dyadically dependent clauses and insubordinate constructions?

In the most general terms, both the discourse functions adopted by dyadically dependent clauses and the functions encoded by insubordinate constructions involve the expression of textual and interpersonal relations. It is only areas of specific overlap, however, that can provide persuasive evidence of actual

connections between the two construction types. First, there is a correspondence between dyadically dependent clauses constructed with subjunctive mood and the insubordinate constructions with subjunctive mood expressing wishes and commands directed to third persons. Insubordinates of this type have been illustrated in (40), (42), (43) and (47) above. The kind of dyadically dependent constructions that could have given rise to them are illustrated in (56) and (36) above.

(56) A: *¿si pudieras cambiar algo del mundo, qué sería..?*

'If you could change something in the world, what would it be..?'

B: *que no existiera la humanidad... en un mundo tan corrompido, lleno de desigualdad, intereses y muchas veces sin sentido!.. no vale la pena...
hojala todo estuviera virgen de eso, que sólo existiera los animalitos y la naturaleza ... sería hermoso!*

'that humanity did not exist ... in such a corrupt world, full of inequality, interests and, often meaningless! ... it's not worth it ... I wish everything was

free from that, that there was only animals and nature ... it would be
beautiful!’ (YCCQA)

Second, as pointed out above, expressing connectivity to previous discourse – including the signaling of question-answer coherence – is one of the uses of insubordinate clauses. The use is particularly frequent in Spanish. Gras and Sansiñena (resubmitted) show that whenever insubordinate *que*-clauses appear as second parts of adjacency pairs, they can either function as collaborative responses or (strong) rejections to a previous turn. In (57), *que* introduces a turn continuing the topic set by the previous speaker. Uses of this type can be linked to the effect seen in dyadically dependent clauses, where the complementizer explicitly signals the relation of the clausal contents to the preceding discourse. Insubordinate constructions that collaboratively complete another speaker’s turn, as are found in English and German (see (50) and (55) above), may likewise belong to this family of uses.

(57) A: *yo creo que sí la quiero pero noo// no sé*

B: *ya/ que no te apetece estar ahora atado a nadie/ ¿es eso?*

A: I think that I love her but I don't// I don't know

B: right/ [que] you don't feel like being tied up to anybody/ is that it?

(Gras 2013: 92)

In contrast, examples (58) and (59) are emphatic responses by which the speaker contradicts what the interlocutor has said in the previous turn. Typically, the contents of this type of *que*-clause are obvious or self-evident to the current speaker, who may use the construction to express irritation. As such, it involves strong discourse continuity but at the same time it is reminiscent of the emphatic and socially disruptive functions found in dyadically dependent clauses.

(58) A: *he engordado mucho a que sí*

B: *que no has engordado coño/*

A: I've put on a lot of weight right

B: [que] you have not put on weight damn /

(COLA)

(59) A: *que lo has tirado tú*

B: *que no que lo has tirado tú*

A: [que] you have thrown it away

B: [que] no [que] you have thrown it away

(COLA)

Third, insubordinate constructions can be used to signal that previously introduced content is being repeated. Such copying and echoing uses are observed at least in English (as in (54) above) and in Spanish, as in (60):

(60) A: *no están legalizados aquí sabes/ no los hacen*

B: *eh/*

A: *que no los hacen*

A: they are not legalized here you know/ they don't do them here

B: eh?

A: that they don't do them here

(COLA)

They can easily be linked to responses to more elaborate clarification questions containing a complement-taking predicate, followed by a dyadically dependent clause in the answer, as illustrated in (37) above.

In sum, there is convergence between the discourse functions of dyadically dependent clauses and several of the functions found in insubordinate constructions. At the same time, it appears unlikely that the kind of dyadically dependent clauses studied in the present paper would be the only source of insubordinate constructions. Most obviously, the examples of dyadically dependent clauses collected in our study contain no straightforward precedents to the evaluative types of insubordinates that occur at least in French (see (45) above), German (see (48) above) and English (see (51)-(52) above). As it happens, evaluative insubordinates precisely represent one of the types that Van linden & Van de Velde (2014) address in their hypoanalysis-based account of the emergence of insubordinate constructions. It appears, therefore, that insubordinate

constructions develop along multiple pathways of change, of which the pathway proposed by Evans (2007) is one plausible candidate.

5. Conclusions

The main contributions of the preceding discussion lie in exploring the functions of dyadically dependent clauses in spontaneous discourse, as well as in shedding light on the syntactic gradient that exists between dependence and insubordination.

Despite the study's main focus on one specific discourse context, it found evidence that dyadically dependent clauses adopt specific textual and interpersonal functions. In other words, there are specific functional motivations for using dyadically dependent clauses, rather than dependent clauses with explicit matrix or independent clauses without initial complementizer. The retention of the complementizer in dyadically dependent constructions is functional, in marking the relations to previous discourse and the status of the clause within the turn as a whole. The use of dyadically dependent clauses is further found to correlate with directness and emphasis, to the point of signaling speaker irritation in relation to the

previous turn. These findings add credibility to Evans' (2007) ellipsis-based pathway from subordinate to insubordinate constructions, as they provide the missing intermediate stage – i.e. functional specialization in dyadically dependent utterances. Thus, we have refined Evans' cline and explained its steps from an interactional point of view.

At the same time, it is clear that the contexts examined in this paper cannot explain the full wealth of insubordinate constructions actually attested. If Evans' pathway is valid, therefore, it must combine with other pathways. Insubordinate constructions, then, are likely to originate from various sources (in the spirit of Van de Velde, De Smet & Ghesquière 2013) – be it other types of dyadically dependent clauses, or other construction types altogether, as argued for by Mithun (2008) and Van linden & Van de Velde (2014). That said, a fair degree of functional overlap between the dyadically dependent clauses in our data and specific insubordinate constructions is plausible. This is so for optative insubordinate uses in Spanish, French and German, whose putative source – dyadically dependent clauses with subjunctive mood– is indeed attested in the data from YCCQA and from the BNC, the CREA and the COLA. Another possible link has been observed for discourse-

connective uses as found in Spanish and (to a lesser extent) English and German, where the presence of the complementizer marks discourse continuity between an utterance and the utterance in the previous turn. The function of those insubordinates overlaps with that of dyadically dependent clauses, where the retention of the complementizer marks a close tie to the preceding turn. Finally, copying and echoic insubordinates, likewise, can be linked to dyadically dependent constructions.

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